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Ms. Magalie Salas  
Office of the Secretary of the FCC  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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MAY 23 2001

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Subject: "EX PARTE COMMENT FOR DOCKET NUMBER 90-571 on  
NECA FUNDS" and "EX PARTE COMMENT TO DOCKET NUMBER 98-  
67 ON TRS/STS OUTREACH"

May 15, 2001

Dear Ms Salas:

We are very pleased that Texas provides Speech to Speech and that the Texas PUC and plans to reissue its RFI for STS Outreach. I live in Texas and want to make telephones more accessible to people with speech disabilities. When such people have appropriate training to use speech to speech (STS), they become more independent, participate more in the community, get jobs etc. The new relay regulations require states to contract with relay providers in such a way that relay is accessible to users with speech disabilities. Providing outreach appropriate to a particular user population is a way of providing access.

## SUCSESSES

In California, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of STS. One example is Dr. Robert Aber who experienced great growth in his psychology practice once he was able to communicate with clients over STS. Writer Pam Hoyer advanced her writing career substantially using STS to gather facts for articles. Dr Bob Segalman became successful as a social activist helping people with speech disabilities once he began using STS. STS potentially answers the telecommunications needs of thousands of people.

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## PROVIDING ADEQUATE STS OUTREACH

I want to be sure that Texas provides an adequate STS outreach budget. Minnesota has an excellent outreach service for its approximately 5 million people for about \$120,000. As Texas has 4 times the population of Minnesota, your outreach budget may need to be \$480,000 to be effective. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Failure to provide appropriate outreach for STS likely means Texas residents with speech disabilities don't enter the mainstream of life.

Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Texas, I strongly urge you to strengthen and intensify the Texas STS outreach service by making it similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California, Minnesota and Maryland.

## CONCLUSION

I need to remind you that a large proportion of people with speech disabilities have other disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS outreach are adequately provided for. Again, I applaud your plan to issue a RFI for STS outreach.

Sincerely,

Anita Porco  
4230 LBJ, Suite 110  
Dallas, Texas 75244

cc: Disability Rights Office  
Consumer Information Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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